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Carter briefed by chief of CIA

From our Own Correspondent: Washington, November 19

Jimmy Carter today began a series of meetings with Administration officials that will culminate in a session with President Ford on Monday. The President-Elect was briefed by the Head of the CIA, Mr George Bush, and tomorrow he will be visited by Dr Kissinger.

Although Mr Carter has not left Georgia since the election more than two weeks ago, he is already the focus of all the attention. The awesomeness of his rapid translation from an almost unknown local politician to the 39th President will be reinforced once again when Dr Kissinger makes his trip to the tiny community of Plains.

Earlier this week the Secretary of State, who has travelled more than a million miles in the past eight years, joked quite plausibly that he could not find Plains on the map.

Mr Bush briefed Mr Carter twice during the campaign, but the President-Elect has not formally met other Administration officials before. He will make his first post-election trip to Washington on Sunday for meetings with the present Cabinet and the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Mr Arthur Burns.

The session with President Ford, their first encounter since

the television debates, has no formal agenda, according to John Marsh, who is in charge of arrangements for the outgoing Administration.

Although Mr Carter himself is taking a leisurely pace so as not to appear over-presumptuous, his transition staff has now moved into its Washington offices. Plans are going ahead for Mr Carter to produce his own budget proposals very soon after his inauguration, and certainly much earlier than either President Kennedy or President Nixon did.

In the absurdly long interregnum, the outgoing President still has the formal responsibility of producing next year's budget in January, even though he steps down two days later. Mr Carter's transition chief, Jack Watson, has said that the new President hopes to have his own alternative proposals ready by February 15.

These cannot be as detailed as Mr Ford's because he has not got the same bureaucratic apparatus behind him, but Mr Carter wants to submit a "budget-in-brief" to supersede the outgoing Republican one.

As for his Cabinet appointments, which are being eagerly awaited, Mr Carter's former campaign director, Mr Hamilton Jordan, has promised that the President-Elect will start interviewing candidates next week or early the following week.

But announcements are unlikely before mid-December. Mr Jordan said that the President-Elect wanted to reassure the business community by appointing a Secretary of the Treasury who would be a "bridge" to the corporate and financial worlds.